He said to them: If somebody has heard of anything against me, let him speak out. They replied: We have heard that the master does not give his tenant his [lawful share in the] vine twigs. He replied: Does he leave me any? He steals them all! They said to him: That is exactly what the proverb says:[19] If you steal from a thief you also have a taste of it![20] He said to them: I pledge myself to give it to him [in the future]. Some report that thereupon the vinegar became wine again; others that the vinegar went up so high that it was sold for the same price as wine.

It has been taught: Abba Benjamin says, All my life I took great pains about two things: that my prayer should be before my bed and that my bed should be placed north and south. 'That my prayer should be before my bed'. What is the meaning of 'before my bed'? Is it perhaps literally in front of my bed? Has not Rab Judah said in the name of Rab (some say, in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi): How do you know that when one prays there should be nothing interposing between him and the wall? Because it says: Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed?[21] — Do not read 'before my bed', but 'near[22] my bed'. 'And that my bed should be placed north and south'. For R. Hama b. R. Hanina said in the name of R. Isaac: Whosoever places his bed north and south will have male children, as it says: And whose belly Thou fillest with Thy treasure,[23] who have sons in plenty.[24] R. Nahman b. Isaac says: His wife also will not miscarry. Here it is written: And whose belly Thou fillest with Thy treasure, and elsewhere it is written: And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold there were twins in her womb.[25]

It has been taught: Abba Benjamin says, When two people enter [a Synagogue] to pray, and one of them finishes his prayer first and does not wait for the other but leaves,[26] his prayer is torn up before his face.[27] For it is written: Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger, shall the earth be forsaken for thee?[28] And more than that, he causes the Divine Presence to remove itself from Israel. For it says Or shall the rock be removed out of its place?[29] And 'rock' is nothing else than the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says: Of the Rock that begot thee thou wast unmindful.[30] And if he does wait, what is his reward? —

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(1) An allusion to R. Johanan himself, who was a great scholar and a charitable man, and was bereft of his children.

(2) Ibid. XVI, 6.

(3) Ibid. XXI, 21.

(4) Ibid. XXIII, 23.

(5) Jer. XXXII, 18.

(6) Which are enumerated in Mishnah Nega'im I, I.

(7) In Palestine where a leprous person had to be isolated outside the city (cf. Lev. XIII, 46), leprosy was not regarded as 'chastisements of love' owing to the severity of the treatment involved.

(8) Who died in his lifetime. The Gemara deduces from that saying that he regarded the death of children as a chastisement of love. Aruch understands this to have been a tooth of the last of his sons which he preserved and used to show to people who suffered bereavement in order to induce in them a spirit of resignation such as he himself had in his successive bereavements.

(9) The implication is that if one lovingly acquiesces in his sufferings, his reward in the world to come is very great.

(10) R. Johanan. He cured him by the touch of his hand.

(11) If he could cure R. Hiyya b. Abba, why could not he cure himself?

(12) And the patient cannot cure himself.

(13) R. Eleazar was a poor man and lived in a room without windows.

(14) R. Johanan was supposed to be so beautiful that a light radiated from his body, v. B.M. 84a.

(15) Men. 110b.

(16) Learning and wealth. Or perhaps, this world and the next.

(17) I.e., the beautiful body of yours.

(18) You may perhaps have deserved your misfortune through some sin.

(19) Lit., 'what people say'.

(20) Even if your tenant is a thief this does not free you from giving him his lawful share.